

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 PM-05 NSC-05
SP-02 SS-15 L-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 ABF-01 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SCA-01
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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 12365

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: JA, US, VM, SREF

SUBJECT: JAPAN AND INDOCHINA REFUGEES

REF: STATE 190642

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF AUGUST 12 PRIOR TO RECEIPT OF REFTEL, FONOFF 1ST SE ASIA DEPDIR HOGEN NOTED THAT THERE WAS GROWING CONCERN AT FONOFF THAT JAPANESE TREATMENT OF INDOCHINA REFUGEES MIGHT DEVELOP INTO TROUBLESOME BILATERAL ISSUE WITH U.S. HE SAID AMBASSADOR TOGO HAD REPEATEDLY WARNED TOKYO THAT NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF JAPAN'S HANDLING OF REFUGEES ON PART OF U.S. ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS MIGHT HAVE ADVERSE SPILL-OVER EFFECT ON OTHER ISSUES. HOGEN SAW ASSISTANT SECRETARY HOLBROOKE'S AUGUST 4 TESTIMONY BEFORE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION AS INDICATION THAT USG WOULD SOON MAKE HIGH-LEVEL DEMARCHE TO GOJ ON THIS SUBJECT.

2. UNFORTUNATELY, HOGEN OBSERVED, OTHER INVOLVED GOJ AGENCIES, SUCH AS IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES, HAVE THUS FAR APPROACHED PROBLEM IN RELATIVELY NARROW AND NEGATIVE SENSE. ANNOYED THAT JAPAN HAD BEEN CRITICIZED WHEN
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OTHER NATIONS' RECORDS WERE FAR WORSE, SOME OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN PREOCCUPIED WITH REFUTATION OF INACCURACIES CONTAINED IN JUNE 8 NEW YORK TIMES' ARTICLE CRITICAL OF GOJ. (ARTICLE REPORTED THAT VIETNAMESE REFUGEES ON BOARD LIBERIAN SHIP "LOS ANDES" HAD BEEN REFUSED LANDING RIGHTS IN JAPAN. IN FACT, REFUGEE GROUP WAS SUBSEQUENTLY ADMITTED; GOJ ASSERTS THAT DELAY WAS RE-

SULT OF "COMMUNICATIONS DIFFICULTIES" WITH SHIP'S OWNERS.)

3. HOGEN SAID THAT IN EFFORT TO IMPROVE JAPAN'S SUPPORT OF REFUGEES, FONOFF HAD BEGUN NEGOTIATIONS WITH FINANNCE MINISTRY TO INCREASE JAPAN'S ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION TO UNHCR'S SPECIAL FUND FOR INDOCHINA REFUGEES. HOGEN HOPED THAT GOJ'S CONTRIBUTION COULD BE RAISED FROM PRESENT \$1.86 MILLION TO \$2.5 MILLION OR MORE. FINAL DECISION ON UNHCR CONTRIBUTION WOULD NOT BE UNTIL LATE SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER.

4. HOGEN OBSERVED THAT QUESTION OF PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT OF REFUGEES IN ESPAN WAS MORE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE. SLIGHTLY OVER 500 REFUGEES NOW IN JAPAN HAD BEEN ADMITTED "ON A TEMPORARY BASIS." IN FACT, PERMISSION FOR THEIR STAY WAS BEING AUTOMATICALLY EXTENDED. HOGEN STATED THAT FONOFF HAD MADE LOW-KEY SUGGESTIONS TO IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES THAT THESE REFUGEES BE GIVEN "PERMANENT STATUS," THUS ALLOWING THEIR POSSIBLE INTEGRATION INTO JAPANESE SOCIETY. SUCH SUGGESTIONS, HOWEVER, HAVE THUS FAR MET WITH "A KNEE-JERK REFUSAL." HOGEN NOTED THAT SUCH AUTOMATIC NEGATIVE REACTIONS WERE GROUNDED IN JAPANESE CULTURAL HERITAGE AS HOMOGENEOUS SOCIETY AND IN RATHER ILL-DEFINED BUT NEVERTHELESS REAL FEAR THAT EXCEPTION

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FOR SMALL NUMBER OF INDOCHINESE REFUGEES WOULD SOMEHOW OPEN UP JAPAN TO WAVES OF IMMIGRANTS FROM KOREA AND ELSEWHERE.

5. HOGEN EXPECTED THAT IN NEAR FUTURE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE WOULD BRING TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES OF INVOLVED GOJ AGENCIES AT WHICH TIME IT WOULD BE DETERMINED PRECISELY WHAT WERE EXISTING LEGAL, AS OPPOSED TO CULTURAL, BARRIERS TO ALLOWING SOME FORM OF PERMANENT RESETTLEMENT FOR INDOCHINESE. HOGEN WAS CAUTIOUSLY HOPEFUL THAT BY PLACING DISCUSSION OF RESETTLEMENT IN THOSE TERMS, FONOFF COULD MAKE GREATER PROGRESS ON PROBLEM.

6. COMMENT: THESE SIGNS OF OFFICIAL JAPANESE CONCERN OVER INDOCHINA REFUGEE PROBLEM ARE MOST WELCOME. PER REFTTEL EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE GOJ'S EFFORTS IN DIRECTION OF INCREASED SUPPORT FOR UNHCR AND MORE CONSISTENTLY FAVORABLE POLICY OF TEMPORARY ASYLUM FOR BOAT CASES.

MANSFIELD

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 15-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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